

HIDDEN GEMS USA

VOLUME 02



New York

Find your own kind of wonder.

36 PLACES. SIX REGIONS. YOUR NEXT DETOUR.

An independent, thoughtfully researched travel companion.

FIRST EDITION / OCTOBER 4, 2026

A LITTLE OFF THE OBVIOUS PATH

Good places. Room to make them yours.

This guide is for the lakeside hour, the unexpected forest path, and the view that makes you put the phone away. It brings 36 New York State destinations into six useful regional chapters, from Long Island and the city's edges to the Catskills, Adirondacks, Finger Lakes, and western valleys.

Some of these places are well known; others may be new to you. "Hidden gems" is our editorial way of describing rewarding detours, not a promise of empty trails, exclusive access, or a secret nobody else knows.

What you get

36 destination entries, suggested visit windows, seasonal considerations, six trip-grouping chapters, official visitor links, map-search links, and notes on access and hazards.

How to use it

Choose a region, read the route chapter, then select one or two stops per day. Open the official pages before departure. Save this PDF and the maps you need while you have Wi-Fi.

Our research approach

Descriptions draw on park, land-manager, and visitor-organization sources checked for this October 4, 2026 edition. Timings, bases, and trip shapes are editorial suggestions, not measured journeys. We do not claim personal visits to every place.

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hiddengemsusa.company

THE SMALL PRINT THAT MAKES A BETTER TRIP

Before you go.

Check the actual route

A park can be open while a particular trail, campground, building, or approach road is closed. Use each official link and check 511ny.org for the full driving journey. New York State is large: a Long Island day, a Catskills hike, and a western gorge visit need different bases. Map searches are discovery links, not verified parking or turn-by-turn directions.

Treat dates as a snapshot

Access notes reflect sources consulted on October 4, 2026. A closure mentioned here may change; a place without a closure note is not guaranteed open. Recheck close to departure.

Plan for your group

Suggested visit windows include only a broad outing estimate, not driving from your home or lodging. Short trails may still have steps, uneven surfaces, or exposure. Check official accessibility information and your own capabilities.

Budget separately

Park entry, parking, permits, reservations, lodging, fuel, and activities are separate from this guide. Check current official fees. We avoid printing fixed entry prices that can become outdated.

Prepare for the landscape

Coastal storms and dunes, slippery gorges, mountain weather, lake conditions, and ticks require different preparation. Carry water, layers, a suitable map, and the equipment advised by the land manager. Never enter closed areas or cross unsafe water.

Leave a place worth returning to

Stay on designated trails and roads. Do not touch wildlife, collect natural objects, climb fragile formations, or disturb cultural sites. Follow each place's rules for pets, food, drones, fires, and parking.

THE NEW YORK SHORTLIST

Six regions. Thirty-six possibilities.

01 / Long Island & New York City Edges

- 01 Sunken Meadow State Park
- 02 Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve
- 03 Connetquot River State Park Preserve
- 04 Orient Beach State Park
- 05 Fire Island Lighthouse
- 06 Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

02 / Hudson Valley & Capital Region

- 07 Minnewaska State Park Preserve
- 08 Sam's Point Area
- 09 Fahnestock State Park
- 10 Walkway Over the Hudson
- 11 Olana State Historic Site
- 12 John Boyd Thacher State Park

03 / Catskills

- 13 Kaaterskill Falls
- 14 North-South Lake
- 15 Catskills Visitor Center
- 16 Onteora Lake
- 17 Mongaup Pond
- 18 Balsam Lake Mountain

THE NEW YORK SHORTLIST

Six regions. Thirty-six possibilities.

04 / Adirondacks & North Country

- 19 Point au Roche State Park
- 20 Crown Point State Historic Site
- 21 Adirondack Rail Trail
- 22 Paul Smith's College VIC
- 23 The Wild Center
- 24 Rock Island Lighthouse State Park

05 / Finger Lakes & Central New York

- 25 Taughannock Falls State Park
- 26 Robert H. Treman State Park
- 27 Fillmore Glen State Park
- 28 Green Lakes State Park
- 29 Chimney Bluffs State Park
- 30 Ganondagan State Historic Site

06 / Western New York

- 31 Letchworth State Park
- 32 Stony Brook State Park
- 33 Allegany State Park
- 34 Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve
- 35 Panama Rocks Scenic Park
- 36 Old Fort Niagara

REGION 1 / LONG ISLAND & NEW YORK CITY EDGES

Island days, city edges



Fire Island Lighthouse | Joe Shlabotnik | CC BY 2.0

TRIP SHAPE**Three separate short trips | Suggested bases: Queens; Huntington / Oakdale; Greenport**

Keep Jamaica Bay as a New York City outing. On Long Island, choose a North Shore day around Sunken Meadow or Caumsett, then a separate Connetquot or Fire Island Lighthouse day. Orient Beach belongs to a slower North Fork trip based near Greenport. Traffic and the length of the island make a single all-stops weekend unrealistic; check actual transport links and driving times before combining places.

Choose from this chapter

01 / Sunken Meadow State Park

02 / Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve

03 / Connetquot River State Park Preserve

04 / Orient Beach State Park

05 / Fire Island Lighthouse

06 / Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

01 / LONG ISLAND & NEW YORK CITY EDGES

Sunken Meadow State Park

Kings Park | Coast | Suggested visit: 1-3 hours

Season: Spring through fall; quieter weekday mornings

A Long Island Sound shoreline, boardwalk, and wooded slopes offer several ways to spend a coastal hour. Start with the water and choose whether to add an inland walk; you do not need a long beach day to appreciate this corner of the North Shore.

Make a plan. Use the official park map to choose a parking field and a permitted walking route. Bring a wind layer and leave time for a slower boardwalk visit. Check designated swimming arrangements separately from general beach access.

Check before you go. Observe posted swimming and weather restrictions. The park lists a no-pets rule; check current hours, parking fees, and beach conditions before departure.

[OFFICIAL VISITOR INFORMATION](#)

[OPEN A MAP SEARCH](#)

02 / LONG ISLAND & NEW YORK CITY EDGES

Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve

Lloyd Harbor | Coast | Suggested visit: 2-4 hours

Season: Spring through fall; year-round walks when conditions allow

A former estate on a Long Island Sound peninsula now offers a landscape of meadows, woodland, and shoreline. The pleasure is in the transitions: choose a manageable loop and let the quieter habitats become the main attraction.

Make a plan. Begin with the trail map rather than aiming for every part of the property. Huntington is a useful nearby base for food. Confirm which trails and shoreline approaches suit your group and allow time to return before closing.

Check before you go. Stay on designated routes and respect habitat protection. Check permitted activities, current trail restrictions, pet rules, and parking arrangements; shoreline access does not imply swimming permission.

[OFFICIAL VISITOR INFORMATION](#)

[OPEN A MAP SEARCH](#)

REAL PLACES. REAL PHOTOGRAPHS.

Credit where it belongs.

These are real photographs of the named places. They may predate this edition and do not prove current access or conditions. Not every destination has a photograph. Images were resized, compressed, and cropped for layout; scene content was not altered.

Fire Island Lighthouse

Fire Island Lighthouse (1304421632).jpg

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Walkway Over the Hudson

Walkway Over the Hudson 1.JPG

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Kaaterskill Falls

Kaaterskill Falls (5575741951).jpg

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Crown Point State Historic Site

Ruins of Crown Point Fort, New York.jpg

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Taughannock Falls

Taughannock Falls.JPG

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Letchworth State Park, Upper Falls

Letchworth State Park - 20191006 - 04 - Upper Falls and Genesee Arch Bridge.jpg

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